Perceived Stress, Religious Coping Styles, and Collectivism of Korean-Americans

Kyung Wha So

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Loma Linda University
Graduate School

Perceived Stress, Religious Coping Styles, and Collectivism of Korean-Americans

by
Kyung Wha So

A Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology

March 2001
Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this thesis in their opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Perceived Stress, Religious Coping Styles, and Collectivism of Korean-Americans

by

Kyung Wha So

Masters of Arts, Graduate Program in Psychology
Loma Linda University, March 2001
Dr. Louis Jenkins, Chairperson

The present study examined the associations among perceived stress, religious coping styles (Self-Directing, Collaborative, and Deferring), and collectivism in two generations of Korean-Americans. Three scales (Perceived Stress, Collectivism, and Religious Problem Solving) were administered to 145 first and second generation Korean-Americans who were attending Christian worship services, residing in the East and West Coasts of United States. Three hypotheses were tested. First, religious coping styles and collectivism would predict perceived stress levels. Second, Collectivism, Collaborative, and Deferring religious coping would be negatively correlated with the level of perceived stress. Third, the second generation Korean-Americans would have lower collectivism scores, higher Self-Directing scores and a higher perceived stress level than the first generation Korean-Americans.

The results indicated that the first and the second generations had nearly identical scores on Collectivism. Consequently, the analysis showed that there were no differences on perceived stress between the first and the second generations, indicating that neither religious coping styles nor collectivism predicted their levels of stress. The study found that second generation Korean-Americans who embrace their ethnic identities by
attending the Korean ethnic church are not less collectivistic than the first generation Korean-Americans. The results suggested that people living in an individualistic society, practicing individualistic religious coping styles (more self-directing and less deferring), are not necessarily less collectivistic and will not necessarily have a higher level of perceived stress. Further research in the non-church involved second generation Korean-Americans was suggested.
Introduction

Social structure and environmental demands often exceed people's adaptive resources resulting in stress. In the last two decades there has been increased attention on stress research in medicine and in psychology (Aldwin, 1994; Seaward, 1997). Stress may be defined as a threat, real or implied, to the psychological or physiological integrity of an individual. Although stress can be assessed as a subjective experience, it is the behavioral and physiological responses to stress that are most closely linked to measurable health outcomes (McEwen, 1998). The pioneer researcher in stress, Hans Selye, describes the general adaptation syndrome (GAS) as a process in which the body tries to accommodate stress by adapting to it (Selye, 1950). Selye's general adaptation syndrome outlined the parameters of the physiological dangers of stress. His research opened the doors to understanding the relationship between stress and disease as well as the mind-body-spirit connection.

Stress and Health

Since Selye's stress research, physiological research has progressed to understand the three physiological systems that are directly involved in the stress response: the nervous system, the endocrine system, and the immune system. These physiological systems interact to regulate the body's homeostasis (Aldwin, 1994; Anthonovsky, 1979). The combination of various neural and hormonal pathways serve a very important purpose, physical survival. However, when these same pathways are employed continuously in response to chronic stressors, the effects can be devastating to the body. Much research in medicine demonstrates the association between stress and disease (Kobasa, 1979; Seaward, 1997).
In addition to the physiological components of stress, many theories attempt to explain the psychological nature of stress, or more specifically, how humans attempt to cope with the problems they face (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pollock, 1979). Consequently, for the last two decades, there has been more focused attention on stress management (Lazarus, 1984; Seaward, 1997), and specifically more exploration into the mind-body-spirit dynamics of coping (Hathaway & Pargament, 1990; Pargament, 1988; Pargament & Hahn, 1986). The leading researcher in stress and coping, Lazarus, has provided a foundation for the current understanding of the stress-coping relationship (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

**Stress and Coping**

To understand stress and coping mechanisms, Lazarus’s transactional model is the predominant perspective. He explains that emotions influence both the brain and the mind. In other words, the state of mind influences the workings of the body, while the state of the body influences cognitive and emotional processes. The transactional model suggests that the environment (e.g., religion and culture) also has an extensive role in coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Pargament supports the same idea that coping is a transactional process, a process of exchange and encounter between the individual and a situation (problem) within a larger milieu (religion and culture) (Pargament, 1997).

Therefore, with this understanding of stress mechanisms of mind, body, and environment, researchers in stress and coping have reconceptualized the stress process and the dimensions of stress and coping in the context of culture and religion. This reconceptualization also provides a theoretical framework to facilitate empirical study of
different types of coping strategies as well as religious coping strategies (Frankl, 1984; Kobasa, 1982; Meichenbaum, 1975; Schfer, 1992).

According to Lazarus, coping is defined as the process of managing demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the individual's resources. He cites the purposes of coping as the following: (a) to reduce harmful environmental conditions; (b) to tolerate or adjust to negative events or realities; (c) to maintain a positive self-image; (d) to maintain emotional equilibrium; and (e) to continue satisfying relationships with others (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In his coping theory, there are two coping stages: primary appraisal and secondary appraisal. Every stressor undergoes the primary appraisal to determine the extent of damage. It is then reprocessed in a secondary appraisal. At this point, a series of coping responses are lined up with the stressor to see which is the best course of action. Accordingly, the coping process involves virtually every dimension of human functioning: cognitive, affective, behavioral, and physiological.

Pargament emphasizes that the most central quality of coping is possibility: the possibility that the person can rebound from difficult circumstances, that a problem can be anticipated, prevented, or solved, or that something good can be found in hardship (Pargament, 1997). Overall, the theme of individual-confronted-with-difficulty runs consistently through the many definitions of coping. Since coping is defined as a process, involving effort, on the way toward solution of a problem (Murphy, 1974), it involves the use of strategies in dealing with actual or anticipated problems and their attendant negative emotions (Aldwin, 1994).
Coping strategies

There are literally hundreds of coping strategies. To have effective coping results, each coping strategy can be used alone, but in most cases several are used together. A number of coping strategies that deal with stress have been identified, including confrontation (standing one's ground), distancing (acting as if nothing happened), self-control (keeping feelings to oneself), seeking social support from others, accepting responsibility, escaping and avoiding (eating, taking drugs, etc.), as well as planful problem solving and reappraisal (growing as a person as a result of the action) (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Shetter, Delongis, & Gruen, 1986). Some coping strategies may seem appropriate for a particular situation, but may fail to achieve a peaceful resolution. Thus, researchers note that coping strategies can be either positive or negative (Pargament, 1982; Seaward, 1997).

Positive coping strategies should be effective in satisfactorily dealing with stress, based on the accomplishment of a peaceful resolution. Positive coping strategies are not merely to survive, but to thrive in the face of adversity. On the other hand, negative coping strategies provide no enlightened resolutions. They perpetuate perceptions of stress and ineffective responses in a vicious cycle that may never be broken or intercepted. Some examples of negative coping strategies are: avoidance of the problem or inhibition of action, victimization, emotional immobility (worrying), hostile aggression, and self-destructive addictive behaviors, (e.g., drinking, drugs, food bingeing) (Seaward, 1997). Therefore, in order to enhance healthy effects on the coping process, researchers have identified positive coping strategies through empirical studies.
Religion and Coping

It has been noted that religion plays a significant role in effective coping because religion helps people understand and cope with negative life events by offering guidance, support and hope. Religion also provides a frame of reference for understanding the meaning of the events as well as for maintaining self-esteem (Pargament, et al., 1988). In short, religion and coping are separable concepts, however, they are also related phenomena.

In regard to religious coping strategies, religious attribution theory utilizes the concept of attribution in explaining why religious coping is helpful. Attribution is defined as a causal explanation by which people perceive and determine the causation of events (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 1997). According to attribution theory, the fundamental human propensity is to make sense out of the world and to understand the causes of events. To be specific, the theory suggests that attributions are made for a number of reasons: (1) to exercise cognitive control over one's world (Kelly, 1967); (2) to seek meaningful explanations of reality (Valins & Nisbett, 1971); and (3) to maintain and/or enhance self-esteem (Bulman & Wortman, 1977) or perceived freedom (Wortman, 1976; Spilka, 1983). For believers who are convinced of God's reality and presence, attribution to divine causation for outcomes are central components of their interpretation of events. Consequently, in order to successfully respond to adversity, people make religious/God attributions and utilize religious coping strategies in their coping processes.

Recent research also suggests that people differ in their patterns of interpreting the causation for negative events (Spilka, 1982). Spilka notes that there are increased tendencies to make attributions to God when situations are personal, important, negative
or medical rather than impersonal, positive, unimportant and either social or economic in nature. Other research suggests that people are more likely to turn to religion when they experience frustration and tension (Spilka, Hood & Gorsuch, 1985). In his research (Pargament & Olsen, 1992), Pargament also notes that people are more likely to turn to religion in coping when the event is appraised as harmful, unmanageable, a threat to their well-being or a challenge. Additionally, many people report religious coping in response to daily stress, hassles, and frustration (Belavich & Pargament, 1995; Hathaway, 1992).

Since people need more strength in coping with negative outcome situations than positive ones, they seek more help from God in time of stress (Pargament & Hahn, 1986). As psychologist Paul Johnson (1959) put it: when the values of life are at stake, there is reason to be earnest. In times of crisis, religion usually comes to the foreground. The more urgent the need the more men seek a response (Pargament, 1997). Pargament supports the view that more people turn to God for help as a source of support during stress than as a moral guide or an antidote to an unjust world (1986). Therefore, he confirms that religion affects people’s different explanatory frameworks for negative life events, thus, religious coping strategies help to reduce stress and aid coping.

Other researchers have attempted to understand the association among religion, stress, and health. Research findings show that while recent negative life events cause ill health and psychological distress, religiosity is positively associated with health. Specifically, belonging to a religious community, for its resourceful support, counterbalances the negative health consequences of negative life events (Anson, Carmel, & Bonneh, 1990). In studying the association between religion and health, the stress-deterrent effect of religion and the religious community has been supported.
Consequently, one can predict that religiousness strengthens the individual’s ability to cope with stress.

In understanding the mechanisms through which religion and culture provide the capacity to cope with stress, researchers have developed at least three concepts. According to Frankl (1975), man is a “being in search for meaning” (p112). Frankl realized that suffering, which is a direct consequence of profound stress, is a universal experience. Therefore, he reasoned it must have some significant value to the advancement of one’s human potential or spiritual evolution. Frankl did not advocate avoiding suffering, but rather suggested finding a meaningful purpose in suffering. The search for meaning is not a defense mechanism, a rationalization of pain, but the search for a truthful understanding. To Frankl, meaning is not the fabrication of the mind, but a truth uncovered by the soul (Seaward, 1994). Therefore, failure in finding meaning might be pathogenic, causing mental and physical ill-health. Frankl believes that religion provides a sense of meaning to life and human existence and, thus, decreases vulnerability to illness.

Anthonovsky (1979, 1987) developed the concept of the “sense of coherence” to understand the role of religion in coping with stress. The sense of coherence is composed of three components: comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness, and develops through life experiences. Comprehensibility is the orientation by which life events become structured, predictable, and explicable, and manageability is an orientation in which the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by the life events. Anthonovsky’s meaningfulness is close to Frankl’s concept of the will to meaning. Therefore, the person with a strong sense of coherence is able to select the particular
coping resources, styles, or strategies that are most appropriate to deal with a specific stressor confronted at a given time (Anson, Carmel, & Bonneh, 1990). Accordingly, Antonovsky believed that religion promotes the development of this sense of coherence, thus, enhances a person's ability to cope with stress.

Finally, Kobassa (1982) has developed the concept of "hardiness," which is also composed of three components: commitment, control, and challenge. Commitment is the tendency to involve oneself in whatever one encounters, and control is a sense that one causes events in one's life (like locus of control, similar to self-efficacy). Challenge is a willingness to undertake change and confront new activities that represent opportunities for growth. The person with hardiness is the one that has a high level of these three components. The hardy personality is better equipped to cope with stressors, and to avoid their possible negative effects on health. Again, religion provides these three aspects by offering a sense of purpose, promoting one's ability to control situations and strengthening one to take the challenge from the negative life events.

Acknowledging the important role of religion in the coping process, researchers have examined this relationship for the last decade. As a result, religious coping strategies have been consistently found to be a major strategy utilized by people in the process of dealing with problems. Pargament has suggested a more dynamic and situationally based view of the religious dimension of coping. As Lazarus explained the transactional mechanisms of coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), Pargament has also noted that religion can influence peoples' cognition and emotions about their environments in the coping process. Therefore, although most researchers agree that no coping technique will work as a defense against all perceived stress; religious coping,
with its bi-directional role, can serve two purposes as a defense against negative stress: the process of coping as well as a product of coping (Gorsuch & Smith, 1983; Pargament, Olsen, Reilly, Falgout, Ensing, & Haitsma, 1992; Schaefer & Gorsuch, 1993).

Specifically, religion's role is bi-directional. First, religion can contribute to the coping processes, shaping the character of life events, coping activities, and the outcomes of events. For example, religious commitment and spiritual support contribute to the adjustment of people facing life stress. Second, it can also be a product of coping, shaped by the other elements of the process. For example, there is an increase in faith after religious coping with life's aversive events (Pargament, et al., 1992).

**Religious Coping Styles**

In conceptualizing and empirically testing the nature of coping with problems in a religious manner, Pargament developed three dispositional styles of religious coping: Self-Directing, Deferring, and Collaborative. These coping styles have been proposed to vary (Pargament, 1988) along two key dimensions underlying the individual's relationship with God: (1) the locus of responsibility for the problem-solving process (coping process), and (2) the level of activity in the problem-solving process.

The Self-Directing style is an approach in which people rely on themselves in coping rather than on God. From this perspective, it is the individual's responsibility to resolve problems. Although God is not involved directly in this process, this style is not anti-religious because God is viewed as giving people the freedom and resources to direct their own lives. In direct contrast, the Deferring style is an approach in which individuals appear to defer the responsibility of problem solving to God. They passively wait for solutions to emerge through the active efforts of God. These two coping styles
cover both ends of the spectrum of human initiative and divine power—from autonomy, industry, and diligence to deference, passivity, and resignation (Pargament, 1997).

On the other hand, in the Collaborative coping style, both the person and God have active roles in resolving problems. Responsibility for coping is shared. This style can be found in Jewish and Christian traditions. According to the Bible, God prompts the person to do what is right through the help of the Holy Spirit. For example, Paul said “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Pargament, Kennell, Hathaway, Grevenoed, & Jones, 1988).

Thus, the Collaborative style appears to be the most spiritually based coping approach among the three. Moreover, studies provide evidence that people who report a greater sense of spiritual support often experience more positive outcomes (Wright, Pratt, & Schmall, 1985). Additionally, in Pargament’s project on Religion and Coping (Pargament, Ensing, et al., 1990), he found that people with more spiritually based coping reported better adjustment to life crisis. In fact, of all the methods of religious coping, spiritually based coping emerged as the strongest predictor of positive outcomes.

The Collaborative coping style is the most closely related to spiritual support because it is based on the perception of a partnership with God. Therefore, the Collaborative style is the most helpful among the three religious coping styles.

According to Pargament, the religious coping styles show the distinctive ways people integrate their conceptions of divine power with human initiative in the coping process although the involvement of religion in coping may appear to be uniform to the distant observer. However, a closer look at religion reveals, a many-sided force that can come to life in a variety of ways in every part of the coping process: in the ends people
strive toward, in the construction of life events, and in the concrete steps people take in
the midst of stress. Moreover, to the question of what makes religion compelling as a
way of coping with stressful life events, Pargament suggests that religion is more
compelling to those who are more acutely aware of the limitations of the human
condition (Pargament, 1997).

Religion, Culture, and coping

In addition to the role of religion in the coping process, researchers recognize the
importance of the interaction of religion and culture in coping. Religion interprets,
integrates, and defines the culture’s perspective on, and understanding of, the life of the
individuals and their values in the world. Religion is the ultimate way to affirm the
meaningfulness of life; thus, religion has an integrative role in the culture. The
relationship between religion and culture is clear in that both determine a common view
of life and common standards of behaviors and of value. Therefore, religion is logically
interwoven into the whole culture (Dawson, 1948).

Theories on coping and religion suggest that culture also has an extensive role in
coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Pargament also suggests that culture
shapes appraisals of negative events, coping activities, and outcomes. In this regard, the
subjects of the present study, Korean-Americans, provide an example to understand the
transactional dynamics of stress coping, religion and culture.

Since Korean-Americans have different cultural and religious experiences before
and after immigrating to the U.S., there must be cultural factors that predict the
perception of stress and the religious coping styles. Korean-American’s original culture
was predominantly influenced by Buddhism and Confucianism. Therefore, in order to
understand how the cultural and religious factors affect the shaping of the perception of stress and coping styles, the concepts of individualism and collectivism (Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994) were introduced for the present study.

**Individualism and Collectivism**

The concepts of individualism and collectivism are social-psychological theoretical frameworks. They help to explain cultural phenomena in which people shape and sustain their values, attitudes, and behaviors in terms of individual and group relationships. Since the subjects in the present investigation will have been exposed to two different cultural values, the changes in values and beliefs of Korean-Americans will be reflected in their behavior, particularly, in the way they perceive stress and choose a religious coping style. Moreover, considering Triandis' suggestion (1989) that people become more individualistic in more industrialized societies, the second generation Korean-Americans should be more individualistic than the first generation. Therefore, comparing two generations, the study will demonstrate how individualism/collectivism mediates the relationship between religious coping styles and perception of stress in the context of acculturation.

According to Hofstede (1980), individualism emphasizes "I" consciousness, autonomy, emotional independence, individual initiative, right to privacy, pleasure seeking, financial security, need for specific friendship, and universalism. Collectivism, on the other hand, focuses on "we" consciousness, collective identity, emotional dependence, group solidarity, sharing, duties and obligations, need for stable and predetermined friendship, group decision, and particularism (Kim & Triandis, et al., 1994).
The development of individualism or collectivism within the particular culture can be traced for further understanding of I/C (Individualism and Collectivism). In the West, liberalism serves as a foundation for individualism; in East Asian cultures, Confucianism helps to entrench collectivism by serving as a moral-philosophical basis for self-control and social order. Liberal philosophy, which serves as the foundation for individualism, assumes that individuals are rational and able to use reason to make personal choices. In individualist cultures, each person is encouraged to be autonomous, self-directing, unique, and assertive, and to value privacy and freedom of choice. On the other hand, Confucianism, which has provided the basis of collectivism, prioritizes the common good and social harmony over individual interests. In collectivist societies, individuals are bound by relationships that emphasize common fate. They are encouraged to suppress any individualist and hedonistic desires. As a result, interdependency, succor, nurturance, and compliance are important aspects of collectivism.

Overall, Triandis (1986) defines collectivism as the tendency for a group of people to place "great emphasis on (a) the views, needs, and goals of the in-group rather than on oneself, (b) social norms and duties defined by the in-group rather than the pursuit of pleasure, (c) beliefs shared with the in-group rather than beliefs that distinguish oneself from the in-group, (d) great readiness to cooperate with in-group members, and (e) intense emotional attachment to the in-group" (p 157).

Individualism is very high in the United States and generally in the English speaking countries (Hofstede, 1980), whereas Collectivism can be found in parts of Europe (e.g., southern Italy, rural Greece) and much of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. According to Geert Hofstede's data (1970), Koreans ranked eleventh in terms of
collectivism in a group of 50 countries. On the other hand, many Koreans have been exposed to Western ideas and theories, and the country’s affluence has increased at a rate unparalleled in human history. Consequently, research indicates three distinctive trends: (a) a decline in traditional collectivism and concomitant increase in individualism, (b) displacement of the locus of loyalty away from clan and community to nuclear family and country, and (c) weakening of the vertical structure or hierarchy.

It is noteworthy that these changes came at a time when materialistic ideas and values were rising and people began flaunting newly acquired riches. However, despite changes toward individualism, research also indicates that Koreans in both younger and older age groups are still firm collectivists on the basis of their beliefs and attitudes (Cha, 1980). This conclusion is further confirmed by the survey that demonstrated 75% of the young and 86% of the older Korean-American groups supported the idea that loyalty to country and filial piety are important in today’s society. Detailed findings from the survey data indicate that Koreans, including those in their 20s, are still collectivist when it comes to accepting in-group obligations and in-group favoritism, but individualist when it comes to granting autonomy to their children and when family or clan is pitted against self-improvement, or when as a reason for having children, personal pleasure is pitted against continuation of family line (Cha, 1980).

Research suggests that both individualist and collectivist orientations may coexist within individuals and cultures (Sinha & Tripathi, 1994). How these orientations interact and the conditions under which they surface in the same culture are likely to provide us with far greater insights into that culture than would the categorization of the culture as either collectivist or individualist. Thus, the current view of I/C theory consists of a set of
contrasting elements described by the terms, idiocentric and allocentric, for analyses at the individual level that corresponds to I/C at the cultural level (Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clark, 1985). The terms allow quick reference to the person who elects mostly individualist solutions in collectivist cultures (idiocentric) and the person who selects mostly collectivist solutions in individualist cultures (allocentric) (Triandis, 1994). Since the subjects of the current study are the first and second generations of Korean-Americans, the terms, idiocentric and allocentric, are helpful to describe the contrasting elements of individualism and collectivism coexisting among younger and older Korean-Americans.

I/C are the complex social, cultural, and psychological phenomena which have been developed as strategies to cope with, and adapt to people’s environments. Values, norms, and beliefs developed on the I/C dimension were institutionalized as cultural molds that serve to mediate between environmental pressures and individual survival. In this regard, I/C are the cultural coping strategies that serve better as in the groups or as by individuals depending on different circumstances. Therefore, for the present study, the concepts of I/C provide a more concise, coherent, integrated, and empirically testable dimension of cultural variation in terms of coping with environments along with the religious coping strategies.

Furthermore, while Western psychology has been more concerned about the relationships between the individual and other individuals, the I/C dimension focuses not on individuals but on groups, as well as on the psychology of relatedness (Kagitcibasi, 1994), in societal contexts within which individuals develop their personalities, cultural values, and religious beliefs. In this regard, some researchers have noted industrialization,
urbanization, and capitalism have not significantly altered the underlying cultural value system that emphasizes human-relatedness (Lebra, 1976; Misumi, 1988; Stevenson, Azuma, & Hakuta, 1986). Similarly, although many external features of Korean culture have changed, research indicates that the core elements of the culture that emphasize human-relatedness remain strong. Thus, the present study also provides an understanding of how first and second generation Korean-Americans have developed their own unique strategies to cope with both internal and external environmental challenges based on their unique cross-cultural experiences.

Therefore, based on the presented theories of stress, coping, and religious coping, the present study incorporated the perspective of the I/C continuum into the ways people perceive stress and choose a religious coping style among the first and the second generation Korean-Americans. To conclude, Pargament views research as an opportunity to learn something about people as well as to assist people with their life difficulties (Pargament, 1986). The present investigation assessed how religious beliefs and cultural values impact perceived stress in two groups of Korean-Americans and, thus, may lead to better assistance for Korean-Americans.

The present study will test the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1**: Collaborative and Deferring religious coping scores will be negatively correlated with the level of perceived stress.

**Hypothesis 2**: Self-Directing scores will be positively correlated with the level of perceived stress.

**Hypothesis 3**: Collectivism will be negatively correlated with the level of perceived stress.
Hypothesis 4: Collectivism will be positively correlated with Deferring religious coping scores and negatively correlated with Self-Directing scores.

Hypothesis 5: It is hypothesized that religious coping styles and collectivism level are predictive of perceived stress level.

Hypothesis 6: The first generation will have higher collectivism and collaborative coping scores than the second generation.

Hypothesis 7: The second generation will have higher Self-Directing religious coping scores and lower collectivism, and will, therefore, have higher levels of perceived stress than the first generation.
Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 145 Christian Korean-Americans who were residing in the East and the West Coasts of the United States. There were 80 first generation and 65 second generation subjects. The participants were recruited through health seminars and church activity. Ages ranged from 24 to 79, with a mean of 44.2 years for the first generation group. Second generation subjects were either born or came to the US before the age of 6 years. Ages ranged from 18 to 36, with a mean of 24.2 years. The gender of the participants for the first generation consisted of 41.3 % male and 58.8 % female and 61.5 % male and 38.5 % female for the second generation participants. The religious affiliation of the participants were Adventist (69%), Presbyterian (23.4%), Non-denominational (6.2%), and Catholic (1.4%).

In order to determine whether the sample of the current study was comparable with the normative sample, the mean of each measure was compared with the sample means of the current study.

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<th>Normative Sample</th>
<th>Current Study Sample</th>
<th>Z scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean/ Standard Deviation</td>
<td>Mean/ Standard Deviation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Directing</td>
<td>14.9/ SD= 10.7</td>
<td>13/ SD= 7.7</td>
<td>-2.13 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>18/ SD= 10.7</td>
<td>19.8/ SD= 9.4</td>
<td>2.02 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferring</td>
<td>12.9/ SD= 9</td>
<td>18/ SD= 9.4</td>
<td>6.8 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>27.3/ SD= 6</td>
<td>32.5/ SD= 6</td>
<td>10.4 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Stress</td>
<td>24.9/ SD= 7.5</td>
<td>19.3/ SD= 6.9</td>
<td>-8.9 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p = .05    ** p = .001
As shown in the Table above, there are statistical differences between normative means and the means of the current study in each variable. There are practically meaningful differences on Deferring, Collectivism, and Perceived Stress. Overall, it appears that the sample of the current study differs from the normative sample, and the differences may be due to the cultural and religious differences between the two sample populations.

**Instruments**

Participants completed a survey indicating demographic information (e.g., religion, gender, age, years in U.S.) and ratings on perceived stress, religious coping styles and collectivism.

**Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).** The Perceived Stress Scale, developed by Sheldon Cohen (1983) was used to measure the degree to which situations in one’s life are appraised as stressful. This scale has adequate face validity and the reliability was tested in three samples. Coefficient alpha reliability was .84, .85, and .86 in each of the three samples. Separate correlations between the PSS and the validity criteria were calculated for males and females in each sample. There were no significant differences between males and females. Overall, the PSS showed adequate reliability and demonstrated convergent correlations with life-event scores, depressive and physical symptomatology, utilization of health services, social anxiety, and smoking reduction maintenance. The 10 item scores were obtained by reversing the scores on the four positive items, e.g., 0=4, 1=3, 2=2, etc., and then summing across all 10 items (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983).
Religious Problem Solving Scales. Three subscales (Self-Directing, Collaborative, and Deferring), developed by Kenneth Pargament, were used to measure the three problem solving styles. Religious problem solving items reflective of the three styles were generated for each of six phases: define the problem, generate alternative solutions, select a solution, implement a solution, redefine the problem, and maintain oneself emotionally.

The shorter versions of the scales, which will be used for the present study, were developed by selecting the one item from the pair of items for each of the problem solving dimensions with the highest factor loadings. This process yielded three six-item scales with high internal consistency: Collaborative (Items C1, C2, C3, C4, C6, C7); Self-directing (Items S1, S2, S4, S5, S7, S10); and Deferring (Items D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D7). The items of the short form scale have been randomized. Participants were asked to indicate how often each of the statements applied to them. They responded on a five point Likert scale ranging from “Never” to “Always.” Responses to 6 items were summed and divided by 6 in order to obtain mean scores for each scale. There was no reverse coding. Cronbach’s alpha statistics were calculated as a check on the internal consistency of the items. The reliability estimates for the three scales were high: Collaborative (.94), Self-Directing (.94), and Deferring (.91). The scales have also demonstrated adequate validity (Pargament, 1988).

Collectivism Scale. The Collectivism Scale, developed by Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, Yoon, was used. The 10 items describe behavioral choices that favor group goals in situations where group and personal goals come into conflict. Study results reveal that the scale is internally consistent (Cronbach’s alpha ranged from .77 to .88). In
addition, the test-retest reliability is also high (r = .71, p < .001). The correlation between the Collectivism Scale and the Social Desirability Scale is non-significant (r = .08), meaning that the Collectivism Scale is independent of response bias, owing to acquiescence and social desirability. In factor analyses, the variance explained by the first factor ranged from 75% to 96% of the common variance indicating content validity (Kim & Triandis, 1994).

Procedure

Since the scales are written in English, the scales were translated into Korean by the author of this study, and then back-translated by a second individual who is fluent in both Korean and English to ensure accuracy. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants attending health seminars and church services in the East and West coasts of U.S. The author attended the events and collected the data at several churches on the West coast, L.A. and San Diego in California and a health seminar speaker gathered the data in the East coast, Berrien Springs in Michigan during his seminar. The first generation Korean-Americans filled in the Korean version and the second generations filled in the English version of the questionnaire. The participants were informed about the procedure of the study, anonymity, and volunteer participation. The group differences between in the East coast and West coast were tested. Since none were significantly different, the two groups were collapsed together for the analysis.
Results

Descriptive Statistics

Demographic information on the subjects is presented in Table 1. Descriptive statistics for each scale score are shown in Table 2. The data shows that the trimmed means are almost identical to the actual total means, indicating that there are no single-sided outliers. Histograms indicated that Perceived stress, Collectivism, Collaborative, and Deferring copying styles were normally distributed and the Self-Directing was slightly positively skewed. Individual scatter plots between the weighted linear composite predictor variables and the criterion variable did not indicate the presence of any non-linear trend.

Table 1A: Demographics - First generation Korean-Americans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mini</th>
<th>Maxi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>44.21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in US</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>16.70</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender
- Male 33 41.3%
- Female 47 58.8%

Religion
- Christian 79 98.8%
- Non-Christian 1 1.3%

Denomination
- Adventist 53 66.3%
- Presbyterian 24 30%
- Non-denomination 1 1.3%
- Catholic 1 1.3%
- Non-Christian 1 1.3%
Table 1 B: Demographics-Second Generation Korean Americans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mini</th>
<th>Maxi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>24.23</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in US</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>23.23</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>61.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38.5%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denomination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventist</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-denomination</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Collectivism, Collaborative, Self-directing, Deferring, and Perceived Stress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>5 % Trimmed Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mini</th>
<th>Maxi</th>
<th>Chronbach Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Stress</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-directing</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Table 3 provides the inter-correlations between the Perceived Stress, Collectivism, Collaborative, Self-Directing, and Deferring scales. Collaborative and the Deferring religious coping scores were not significantly correlated with perceived stress ($r = -.11, r = - .13$). The Self-directing scores were not significantly correlated with Perceived stress ($r = .13$). Collectivism was not significantly correlated with Perceived stress ($r = -.09$). Collectivism was not significantly correlated with Deferring ($r = .16$) or Self-Directing ($r = -.04$). Thus, hypotheses one, two, three, and four were not supported, though all the correlations were in the expected direction.

Multiple Regression predicting Perceived Stress with Collectivism, Collaborative, Self-Directing, and Deferring

A multiple regression was used to determine the degree to which perceived stress could be predicted by Collectivism, Collaborative, Self-Directing, and Deferring. Table 4 summarizes the regression equation; an $R^2$ square of .032 was obtained. It was found that none of the variables were significant predictors of stress. Scatter plots between the weighted linear composite predictors and the outcome variable did not indicate the presence of any non-linear trend.

Independent pooled-variance t-Tests

Since there was homogeneity of variance for the outcome variables in the first and the second generation groups, the pooled-variance independent $t$-test was used to examine the differences between the first and second generations. Table 5A and 5B show the mean differences of the variables between the two groups. There are two significant
Table 3: Inter-correlations between Perceived Stress, Collectivism, Collaborative, Self-Directing, and Deferring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived Stress</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collectivism</td>
<td>-.095</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Collaborative</td>
<td>-.110</td>
<td>.269**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-Directing</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>-.037</td>
<td>-.580**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Deferring</td>
<td>-.130</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.823**</td>
<td>-.471**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p< .01

Table 4: Multiple Regression predicting Perceived Stress with All other Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables predicting</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Stress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>-.096</td>
<td>-1.089</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>.624</td>
<td>.534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Directing</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>1.178</td>
<td>.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferring</td>
<td>-.142</td>
<td>-.963</td>
<td>.337</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R square = .032
F = 1.167
Adjusted R square = .005
p = .328
Table 5 A: Independent Pooled-Variance t-Test: Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Stress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2.952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Directing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2.538</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 B: Independent Pooled-Variance t-Test for Equality of Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Stress</td>
<td>-0.311</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>-0.902</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0.369</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>2.932</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Directing</td>
<td>-1.922</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferring</td>
<td>5.925</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mean differences between the two groups. The first generation group was higher on the Deferring style and on the Collaborative than the second generation group. The second generation group did not have higher levels of perceived stress than the first generation group.

**Supplementary Analysis**

Several supplementary analyses were performed. First, the potential demographic covariates (age, gender, and region) for the prediction of perceived stress were tested. Age ($r = -.052, p = .531$), gender ($t = -1.730, p = .086$) and the East and West coast ($t = -1.392, p = .166$), were not significantly correlated with stress. Thus, these variables were not used as co-variables in the analysis.

Second, since there was a considerable difference in the number of males ($N = 40$) and females ($N = 25$) in the second generation group, gender by generation differences were tested with Chi-square ($\text{Chi} = 5.572, p < .05$), and this difference was significant. However, there was no gender difference on perceived stress. Third, as shown in 6A and 6B, the correlations between Deferring and Stress as well as between Deferring and Collectivism seem to differ by generation. Therefore, Fisher's $r$ to $z$ transformations were performed for the first and second generations. The results showed that generation did not moderate the relationship between Deferring and Perceived Stress ($z = 1.143, r = -.060, r = .272, p > .05$) nor between Deferring and Collectivism ($z = 1.597, r = -.249, r = .146, p > .05$).
Table 6 A: Inter-correlations among variables- First generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived Stress</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collectivism</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Collaborative</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>.328**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-Directing</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>-.114</td>
<td>-.558**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Deferring</td>
<td>-.060</td>
<td>.272*</td>
<td>.876**</td>
<td>-.512**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 B: Inter-correlations among variables-Second generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived Stress</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collectivism</td>
<td>-.183</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Collaborative</td>
<td>-.118</td>
<td>.261*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-Directing</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>-.584**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Deferring</td>
<td>-.249*</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.736**</td>
<td>-.392**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Discussion

The present study investigated the relationship between perceived stress, religious coping styles, and collectivism. Specifically, three different religious coping styles were studied to discover whether different religious coping styles predicted perceived stress level. The three religious coping styles were Self-Directing, Collaborative, and Deferring. The Self-Directing coping style is characterized by individual's responsibility to resolve problems rather than relying on God. The Collaborative coping style is characterized by the active role of both the person and God in resolving problems. In the Deferring coping style, the person defers the responsibility of problem solving to God. Additionally, the present study took collectivism and generational differences into consideration since the subjects of the study were first and second generation Korean-Americans who were diverse in acculturation experiences.

The results indicated that the religious coping styles (Collaborative, Self-Directing, Deferring) and Collectivism did not predict the level of perceived stress. There were, however, meaningful associations among the predictor variables. Collectivism related very little to the Self-Directing style for the first and second generation. Also, Collectivism has a moderately positive relationship with Deferring style for the first generation but very little for the second generation. The first generation group and the second generation group were not different on Collectivism, Perceived Stress, or Self-Directing. There were moderate differences in the Collaborative style and large differences in the Deferring style by generation.

There were some expected significant correlations among predictor variables. For example, there were significant positive correlations between Collectivism and
Collaborative scores as well as between Collaborative and Deferring scores. There were expected negative correlations between Self-directing and Collaborative scores as well as between Self-Directing and Deferring scores. Interestingly, Collaborative and Deferring scores showed highly positive significant correlations. In addition, the cross-sectional analysis by generation as shown in figure 3 revealed the same correlational patterns among the variables. There was a significant positive relationship between Collectivism and Deferring in the first generation group and a negative relationship between Deferring and Perceived Stress in the second generation group. However, these correlational differences were not significantly different in magnitude.

The high correlations between Collaborative and Deferring scores in both cross-sectional and aggregate analyses may be explained by close examination of the items from the Collectivism scale. For example, an item from the Collectivism scale such as "I stick with my group even through difficulties" demonstrates the collaborative attitude. Also, an item such as "I support my group, whether they are right or wrong" demonstrates the deferring attitude, yielding the responsibility to the group in making an active judgment. In fact, every item in the Collectivism scale shares the collaborative and/or deferring features focusing on "we" consciousness, emotional dependence, sharing, group solidarity, and collective identity (Triandis, 1986). Consequently, the results showed a strong positive relationship between Collaborative and Deferring in both analyses, between the Collectivism and the Deferring in the first generation group, and negative relationships between the Collaborative/Deferring and the Self-Directing styles in both generations.
In addition, referring to Pargament’s description (Pargament et al, 1993) of these two coping styles, in the Collaborative style, the responsibility for coping is shared with the person and God. In the Deferring style, the person yields the responsibility of problem solving to God. Then, the constructs of collaborating and deferring responsibility appear to have some common characteristics that contribute to the high correlation between the Collaborative and the Deferring styles. The common characteristics in both coping styles seem to be the interdependency towards people (horizontal) and God (vertical).

The present study acknowledged the effects of collectivism in different coping styles and in perceived stress for the Korean-American population sample. The assumption of the study was that the second generation Korean-Americans brought up in the U.S. would be more individualistic than the first generation group. Accordingly, the hypotheses proposed were that the first generation group would have higher Collectivism scores and Collaborative coping scores than the second generation group. Thus, the second generation group would have higher levels of perceived stress than the first generation group. However, the results were surprising in that the first and the second generations had nearly identical scores on Collectivism. Consequently, the collapsed data analysis showed that there were no differences on perceived stress between the first and the second generations, indicating that neither religious coping styles nor collectivism predicted their levels of stress.

However, despite the fact that the second generation has almost the same level of Collectivism as the first generation, the second generation exhibited slightly higher scores on the Self-Directing coping style and lower scores on the Collaborative coping style than the first generation. Also, the second generation had significantly lower scores than
the first generation on the Deferring style. It seems that to the first generation, being collectivistic includes more use of collaborative and deferring styles, whereas, to the second generation, being collectivistic in the individualistic society includes becoming more collaborative but, not necessarily becoming more deferring.

The question, then, is why did the second generation exhibit the same levels of collectivism as the first generation when they were expected to be less collectivistic as they grew up in the individualistic U.S. First of all, collectivism and individualism are not uni-dimensional concepts on a single continuum in which an individual would fall somewhere between individualistic and collectivistic. Rather, I/C are two distinct concepts in which research suggests both individualist and collectivist orientations may coexist within individuals and cultures (Triandis, Leung, Villareal, & Clark, 1985).

Furthermore, since collectivism focuses on groups as well as on the psychology of relatedness in the societal context (Kagitcibasi, 1994), some researchers have noted industrialization and capitalism have not significantly altered the underlying cultural value system that emphasizes human-relatedness (Lebra, 1976; Misumi, 1988; Stevenson, Azuma, & Hakuta, 1986). In this regard, the second generation Korean-Americans exhibited the coexistence of collectivism and individualism. As a result, they showed more use of the Self-Directing style, which is the high level of individualistic coping, while still displaying strong collectivistic social and psychological ethnic values (Hong & Hong, 1996).

Secondly, the ethnic identity development is another major factor that further explains this phenomenon. Growing up in the U.S. as ethnic minority members, the second generation undergoes unique ethnic identity development. While many theories
suggest that ethnic identity development is predominantly an internal, intra-psychic process, studies indicate that Asian-Americans are largely influenced by external forces such as relationships and the avoidance of shame (Huang & Yeh, 1996).

For example, in Asian cultures, shame and its attendant loss of face are used to reinforce familial and cultural obligations, and societal expectations. Shaming can involve loss of support and confidence from one’s family and community. Therefore, shame is particularly painful to a member of a collectivistic culture in which relationships and interdependence are crucial to the very existence of the self (Shon & Ja, 1982). As a result, for many second generation Korean-Americans whose sense of self rests on interdependence and group membership, the avoidance of shame may contribute greatly to their ethnic identity development.

Given this knowledge, it seems that the second generation of Korean-Americans identifies with the first generation regarding cultural ethos based on a sense of commonality of origin, beliefs, values, customs or practices of the Koreans. Hence, understanding how the second generation develops an integrated sense of self inclusive of their collectivistic cultural background and the present individualistic cultural contexts would be valuable.

The subjects of this study are second generation Korean-Americans attending Korean ethnic churches. Referring to Marcia’s stage of identity formation, the second generation Korean-Americans in the Korean ethnic churches seem to be a group which have explored their ethnic identity from diffusion/ foreclosure and are committed to their Korean ethnic identity (Achieved) (Phinney, 1989). They seem to achieve balance and
pride in their ethnic identity by combining different aspects of traditional Korean and Western values.

Thirdly, the Korean ethnic church involvement of the second generation explains why the second generation shares the same level of collectivistic values with the first generation. The Korean ethnic churches have been the most well-established social, cultural, and educational centers for Korean-Americans since the beginning of the Korean immigration history. The Korean churches have been the most inclusive and accessible social institution for Korean-Americans regardless of sex, age, or socioeconomic status and provide Korean-Americans with regular opportunities for social interaction (Park & Murgatroyd, 1998). In short, the Korean ethnic churches provide a home away from home, providing feelings of interdependence of Korean family. Thus, strong affiliation with Korean ethnic churches make it possible for the second generation Korean-Americans to share a sense of connectedness to their heritage and tradition, and to learn its collectivistic values as well (Hong & Hong, 1996).

In this regard, the results of the current study found that second generation Korean-Americans who embrace their ethnic identities by attending the Korean ethnic church are not less collectivistic than first generation Korean-Americans, exhibiting no differences on the levels of perceived stress. Therefore, the results of the present study suggest that people living in an individualistic society practicing more individualistic religious coping styles (self-directing and less deferring) are not necessarily less collectivistic when influenced by their own ethnic cultural values and will not necessarily have a higher level of perceived stress.
This suggestion has some interesting implications in terms of adjustment of Korean-Americans living in an individualistic society with collectivistic cultural backgrounds. First, from the perspective of coping theory, there is no single key to good coping for everyone because coping is a transactional process, involving a complex interplay of personal, situational, and larger social forces and because the value of any coping method is intimately tied to the values of the individual (Pargament, 1997). Hence, the first and second generation of Korean-Americans vary in choosing their methods of religious coping depending on their different objects of significance and values, resulting in different ends in their lives. It is noteworthy that when confronted with life stressors, any way of coping may be associated with both advantages and disadvantages.

For example, the individualistic emphasis on self would be helpful in terms of efficacy of individuals who are viewed as an entity inside which has absolute power to regulate the self. However, there is an important downside. Seligman (1990) argues that individualistic value of the “maximal self” has to come to be the repository of all hopes for oneself and all the meaning must come from the self, which is too great a burden to place on individual selves, causing stress. On the other hand, Markus and Kitayama (1991) note that collectivistic individuals are not separated from social context but are more connected and less differentiated from others. Larger institutions such as family, religion, or nation provide a context of meaning for individuals. The downside of the collectivistic self would be the lack of self efficacy. Therefore, any of the religious coping styles that the first and second generation of Korean-Americans choose may interact with their cultural values and be associated with positive and negative outcomes.
simultaneously. Consequently, observations of coping styles of the first and second generation of Korean-Americans reveal differences despite the outcome of perceived stress being similar.

A second implication in terms of adjustment of Korean-Americans with bi-cultural values has more to do with religion than with coping styles. Pargament (1997) states that, at the risk of stereotyping, American psychology is largely a psychology of personal control, developing a number of ways to enhance a person’s control over what is within their control. But psychology is less knowledgeable and helpful when it comes to the uncontrollable situations that are less amenable to further action due to fundamental human limitations. Religion (with its focus on the uncontrollable) offers more to people because many of most powerful transformations in coping are rooted in religion. Therefore, the first and second generations of Korean-Americans who have religious faith while dealing with difficulties may not be greatly different from each other especially on the levels of perceived stress as revealed in the current study. Thus, culture and religion may be the factors that lead the sample of the current study be very different from the normative samples as illustrated earlier. While the normative samples were drawn from pre-dominantly white population regardless of their religious backgrounds, the sample of the current study was drawn from Christian Korean-American populations.

A limitation of the present study may lie in the Collectivism measure. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients were obtained for each of the measures, indicating that the scales have acceptable homogeneity. Three of the scales have reliabilities greater than .85. The Collectivism scale was .71, which might produce less accurate relationships with other variables. For example, while Collectivism showed strong correlation with
Collaborative, it did not with Deferring when Collaborative and Deferring showed very strong relationships. Also, the Collectivism scale did not provide an effective measurement of perceived stress as the first and the second generations showed nearly identical scores on the Collectivism as well as the Perceived Stress scale. Therefore, we do not know if the value orientation of the I/C differentiate the levels of perceived stress. Further research measuring the level of individualism would be informative in this differentiation.

Another limitation of the present study was that the subjects were of a predominantly church-involved second generation group. Further research can explore differences in non-church involved second generation with the moderating effects of the level of acculturation and the faith development with age, using longitudinal method. Lazarus (2000) emphasizes that longitudinal, prospective, and microanalytic approaches (in-depth observation and holism) are needed for the study of stress and coping, especially for causation in stress and coping.

Also, in the context of religion and culture, further research direction for the study of stress and coping may lie in the direction of the cognition and emotion debates of the recent past (Lazarus, 1999). Lazarus states that coping processes that generate positive affect in chronic stress involve meaning (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). This means that stress, coping, and emotion depend on the relational meaning that an individual constructs from the person-environment relationship. It suggests that culture and religion which are essential factors to form meanings in person-environment relationships are critical elements to add in the study of stress and coping.
References


Seligman, M. E. P. (1990). Learned Optimism. New York:


APPENDIX A: FIGURES

Histograms for Variables

Perceived Stress

Std. Dev = .69
Mean = 2.93
N = 145.00
Collectivism

CSTOT

Collaborative

COLLABO
Self-Directing

Deferring
Scatter plots for variables

Perceived Stress and Collectivism

Perceived Stress and Collaborative
Perceived Stress and Self-Directing

Perceived Stress and Deferring
APPENDIX B: SURVEY

Statement of Informed Consent

Participant's Name : ------------------------------- Date ---------------

Project Title: Perceived Stress, Religious Coping Styles and collectivism of Korean-Americans.

Description and Explanation of Procedure: Participants will be given questionnaire which ask to answer as honestly and as completely as they can. Completing a questionnaire will take 15 minutes.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to find out how the relationships between the level of perceived stress and the religious coping styles and the cultural factor, collectivism among Korean-Americans.

Risks and Discomforts: Minimal
Voluntary nature of participation: Your participation in this study is purely voluntary. You may choose to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality of information obtained during the study will be protected. Also collected data will be anonymous.

Supervisor: Louis Jenkins, Ph. D. 909-558-8752
Researcher: Kyung So, M.S. 909-478-8577
Dept. of Psychology, Loma Linda University

Consent:
I have been fully informed of the above described procedures. I give permission for my participation in this study. I know that the researcher listed above and her associates will be available to answer any questions I may have. If, at any time, I feel my questions have not been adequately answered, I may request to speak with either the principal researcher or the chairperson of Loma Linda University's Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects (909-824-4531). I understand that I am free to withdraw this consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time without prejudice. I am also aware that no compensation is available for any physical injury which results from participation in this survey and that a copy of this informed consent statement will be provided to me upon request.

----------------------------------------
Participant's Signature
Please indicate with a check for the following information about you.

A. Age:

B. Gender: ---- M ---- F

C. Birth Place: --- Korea ---- U.S.A.
   If it is Korea, indicate your age when you came to U.S. age ------
   Or, how many years have you lived in U.S. -------- years

D. Religion: ----- Christianity ----- Non-Christianity
               ------------------- Others

E. Denominations: ----- Adventist ----- Presbyterian
                   ----- Baptist ----- Methodist
                   ----- Non-denomination
                   ----- Catholic

F. During the past 4 weeks, how would you rate your health in general?
   ----- Excellent ----- Very good ---- good ---- Fair ---- Poor

G. During the last 4 weeks, how much have you been bothered by emotional problems
   such as feeling anxious, depressed, irritable or downhearted and blue?
   ----- Not at all ----- Slightly ----- Moderately ----- Quite a bit ----- Extremely

H. During the past 4 weeks, was someone available to help you if you
   needed and wanted help?
   ----- Yes, as much as I wanted ----- Yes, quite a bit ----- Yes, some
   ----- Yes, a little ----- No, not at all
Religious Problem Solving Scales: Short Form

Presented below are several statements concerning the role of religion in dealing with problems. Please read each statement carefully, think about how often the statements applies to you, and circle around one of the five numbers to indicate how often the statement is true of you.

1 = Never 2 = Occasionally 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Very Often 5 = Always

1. When it comes to deciding how to solve a problem, God and I work together as partners. 1 2 3 4 5

2. After I've gone through a rough time, I try to make sense of it without relying on God. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Rather than trying to come up with the right solution to a problem myself, I let God decide how to deal with it. 1 2 3 4 5

4. When I have a problem, I talk to God about it and together we decide what it means. 1 2 3 4 5

5. In carrying out solutions to my problems, I wait for God to take control and know somehow He'll work it out. 1 2 3 4 5

6. I act to solve my problems without God's help. 1 2 3 4 5

7. When faced with trouble, I deal with my feelings without God's help. 1 2 3 4 5

8. When a situation makes me anxious, I wait for God to take those feelings away. 1 2 3 4 5

9. When considering a difficult situation, God and I work together to think of possible solutions. 1 2 3 4 5

10. When I have difficulty, I decide what it means by myself without help from God. 1 2 3 4 5

11. After solving a problem, I work with God to make sense of it. 1 2 3 4 5

12. Together, God and I put my plans into action. 1 2 3 4 5
13. I do not think about different solutions to my problems because God provides them for me. 1 2 3 4 5

14. When deciding on a solution, I make a choice independent of God’s input. 1 2 3 4 5

15. I don’t spend much time thinking about troubles I’ve had; God makes sense of them for me. 1 2 3 4 5

16. When I feel nervous or anxious about a problem, I work with God to find a way to relieve my worries. 1 2 3 4 5

17. When a troublesome issue arises, I leave it up to God to decide what it means for me. 1 2 3 4 5

18. When thinking about a difficulty, I try to come up with possible solutions without God’s help. 1 2 3 4 5

Perceived Stress Scale – 10 Items

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, please indicate with a circle how often you felt or thought a certain way.

0 = Never 1 = Almost never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Fairly often 4 = very often

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly? 0 1 2 3 4

2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? 0 1 2 3 4

3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and “stressed”? 0 1 2 3 4

4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? 0 1 2 3 4

5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way? 0 1 2 3 4

6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? 0 1 2 3 4
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?  
0 1 2 3 4

8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?  
0 1 2 3 4

9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?  
0 1 2 3 4

10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?  
0 1 2 3 4

Collectivism Scale

1 = Never  2 = Occasionally  3 = Fairly Often  4 = Very Often  5 = Always

1. I sacrifice self-interest for my group.  
1 2 3 4 5

2. I act as fellow group members would prefer.  
1 2 3 4 5

3. I stick with my group even through difficulties.  
1 2 3 4 5

4. I maintain harmony in my group.  
1 2 3 4 5

5. I respect the majority’s wish.  
1 2 3 4 5

6. I support my group, whether they are right or wrong.  
1 2 3 4 5

7. I respect decisions made by my group.  
1 2 3 4 5

8. I remain in my group if they need me, even though dissatisfied with them.  
1 2 3 4 5

9. I avoid arguments within my group, even when I strongly disagree with other members.  
1 2 3 4 5

10. I make an effort to avoid disagreements with my group members.  
1 2 3 4 5